Agreements Annual Trade Protocols are signed on the calendar year basis. However, during 1991-92, Trade Agreements with the new Republics of Kazakhistan and Uzbekistan have been signed. Trade Protocols for 1992 have also been concluded with Czechoslovakia, Romania, Uzbekistan, China and Russia. The new Agreement/Protocols signed provide for trade in non-convertible Indian Rupees on a balanced basis while also permitting transactions by way of counter trade, barter payments in freely convertible currency or any other internationally recognised form of business co-operation.

Dunkel's Draft Proposals

3380. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether in a seminar in Delhi on Sunday the 12th January, 1992 he criticised the Dunkel's draft proposals relating GATT, saying that the draft was discriminatory and detrimental to India's interests; and

(b) if so, in what precise aspects of the Dunkel's proposals were considered discriminatory and detrimental to India's interests?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) In a seminar organised by the Indian Chapter of the union inter-nationale des Advocats on 12 January 1992, the Minister of State for Commerce made the following statement on the Uruguay Round issues.

"The world has been less than fair to India. Take agriculture. In agriculture, from the very beginning, the central issue has been the extent of reform that should be accomplished in trade and production policies in agriculture. The US and the Cairns Group wanted elimination of all subsidies and protective barriers in agriculture. While the European Community, Japan and a number of European countries were prepared to reduce subsidies and protection, they found the objective of elimination politically infeasible. The differences persisted. India was not one of the main protaganists. But we encouraged the developed countries to bring down the levels of protection and subsidy more rather than less. In this debate, the crucial issue that is forgotten is the fundamental distinction between subsidy in a developed country and in developing countries. In a developed country like the US or Canada or Australia, the subsidy is to perpetuate over-production and dump the excess production on other countries, failing which into the sea. In developing countries, the subsidy is to ensure food security for our people, self-sufficiency and to protect rural employment. So, when GATT says 'reduce subsidies', that rule, if it is applied in a procrustean manner, will be discriminatory rather than non-discriminatory. I will give you one more example. Take the issue of patents. The patent system the worldover represents a balance between the object of rewarding the innovator by granting him a monoply for a limited time period for exploiting the invention and the objective of protecting the consumer against a possible abuse of the monopoly. How do you strike the balance? Can you strike the balance at the same level in a developed country and in a developing country? And what will happen if you strike such a balance? To-day, no more than 30 per cent of India's population has access to modern health-care, modern medicines. India's prices of medicine are among the lowest in the world. If a patent regime as envisaged by the US and other countries and as adumbrated in the Dunkel Package is accepted without qualification, it is inevitable that prices of drugs in India will go up five times or ten times. What does that mean? It means that even among the 30 per cent today who have access to the modern medical care, perhaps one half will be driven out of the cover and no more than ten per cent of the people of this country would have access to modern medical care and modern medicines. Our plea, therefore, in Geneva has been that you cannot apply these rules without exceptions. When Japan says, "You cannot apply tarrification without exception; I have to, have farmlands in my country. Otherwise my childern will grow up without knowing what a farm is, what agriculture is, the West must understand Japan's

concern. When India says, "We cannot accept a patent regime which will raise our prices five times or ten times because it will drive vast millions of our people who have some access to medical care today be-yond the pale of the medical system," the West must understand this.

Nevertheless, let me conclude by saying that it is in our interest that there is a world trade regime which is fair and non-discriminatory. It is in the interest of developing countries to have a set of rules and regulations for world trade. We have a greater stake in fair and non-discriminatory rules than the developed world and therefore, India will do its best to ensure that a set of rules are accepted in the world, that a multilateral trading organisation does come into existence as a successor to GATT. But we will do so only after defending and protecting the vital national concerns of India and the Indian people."

Export Obligation Applicable to 100 per cent Export Oriented Units

3381. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the minimum export-obligation applicable to 100 per cent export oriented units from time to time, since the inception of the relevant scheme;

(b) whether any such undertakings were exempted in the past from their originally stipulated export obligations or in which cases such obligations were reduced; and

(c) if so, what are the names of such undertakings and what are the reasons for such exemption or reduction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Units under the 100% EOU Scheme are obliged to export their total production except rejects upto 5% and domestic sales upto a maximum of 25% of the value of production. Sales in the domestic tariff area are also permitted against an import licence/open general licence.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Vacation of a Building by DPLI, Calcutta

3382. SHRI RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had assured that the building No. 2, Ganesh Chandra Avenue, at Calcutta will be vacated by DPLI, Calcutta and handed over to the owners by the first week of December, 1991;

(b) if so, whether the said assurance has been implemented;

(c) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(d) by when the said building is likely to be vacated and handed over to its owners?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) The Government vide reply to Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1314 dated 11.9.91 said that it would vacate the building at No. 2B, Ganesh Chandra Avenue, Calcutta housing the office of the Director Postal Life Insurance as early as feasible.

(b) No, Sir. However, efforts are continuing.

(c) The alternate accommodation earmarked for shifting the O/O the Director, PLI, Calcutta is still under renovation and not yet ready for occupation.

(d) As soon as the renovation work is over the Government would vacate the premises at No. 2 B, Ganesh Chandra Avenue, Calcutta and hand over the same to its owners.

Shortage of Dak Materials at Almora and Ranikhet in U.P

3383. SHRI SHANTI TYAGI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is an acute shortage of Dak materials in Almora District, particularly, at Basot, Taya, Chaunalia, Bhikiasain Bhataraujkhan and Ranikhet Post Offices in Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and